

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 070388 TOSEC 030115
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NO. 8 FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JOHN SAAR BY-LINER WASHINGTON POST
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, HEADED "SEOUL: A TEST FOR CARTER
RIGHTS POLICY."
2. SEOUL - THERE IS CONFUSION AND DISAGREEMENT IN SOUTH
KOREA OVER THE EFFECT, IF ANY, OF PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER'S
HUMAN RIGHTS DIPLOMACY ON PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE'S
REPRESSIVE DOMESTIC POLICIES.
3. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE CARTER'S MESSAGE HAS PENETRATED
LOUD AND CLEAR TO THE BLUE HOUSE OCCUPANT AND THEY DETECT
AN EASING OF CONTROLS ON POLITICAL DISSENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 070388 TOSEC 030115

4. WITH EQUAL CERTAINTY, OTHERS INSIST THAT PARK IS
IGNORING AMERICAN PRESSURES AND MAY EVEN TOUGHEN THE CURBS
ON OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES IF THE PLANNED WITHDRAWAL OF U.S.
GROUND FORCES GOES AHEAD.
5. THE RECENT SUPREME COURT CONFIRMATION OF PRISON SEN-
TENCES ON FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE KIM DAE JUNG AND

17 OTHER DEFENDANTS IN THE CELEBRATED MYONGDONG CASE

(NAMED AFTER THE MYONGDONG CATHEDRAL WHERE AN ANTIGOVERNMENT STATEMENT WAS READ) PROVIDED EVIDENCE FOR THE PROTAGONISTS OF BOTH THEORIES.

6. THE OPTIMISTS SAW THE PROSECUTION'S STAY OF PRISON SENTENCES ON THREE ELDERLY MALE DEFENDANTS AND TWO WOMEN AS PLAIN SIGNS OF A THAW. WITHOUT MAKING AN UNSEEMLY CONCESSION TO U.S. WISHES, THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT WAS SIGNALING ITS INTENTION TO DEAL CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IT WAS SUGGESTED.

7. NOT SO, SAID THE PESSIMISTS. SENTENCES OF ONE TO FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT ON NINE OF THE DEFENDANTS FOR SEEKING THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY AND THE RESIGNATION OF PARK WERE SAVAGELY UNJUST, THEY MAINTAINED, AND FURTHERMORE, A SNUB TO CARTER. "THEY'VE THROWN DOWN THE GAUNTLET," DECLARED A WELL-INFORMED AMERICAN MISSIONARY. "THEY ARE SAYING, 'WE'RE GOING TO DO EXACTLY WHAT WE WANT AND WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?'"

8. FROM RECENT EVENTS IT DOES SEEM CLEAR THE SEOUL GOVERNMENT WANTS TO AVOID FURTHER CLASHES OVER CIVIL LIBERTIES WITH THE WHITE HOUSE AND CONGRESS, IF POSSIBLE. THE APPEARANCE OF A "CHARTER FOR DEMOCRACY" WAS A CLEAR INFRINGEMENT OF THE EMERGENCY DECREE WHICH PUNISHES VIRTUALLY ANY ACT OF POLITICAL DISSENT WITH A MINIMUM ONE-YEAR PRISON TERM, YET NONE OF THE 10 SIGNATORIES WAS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 070388 TOSEC 030115

ARRESTED.

9. SIMILARLY, STRIDENT CRITICISM OF THE PRESIDENT BY A MINOR OPPOSITION PARTY WENT UNPUNISHED AND THE SECRET POLICE SHOWED UNUSUAL TOLERANCE FOR A LIVELY MARCH 8 LABOR DAY RALLY.

10. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS IS ALSO OPERATING WITH MORE FREEDOM. DIRECTIVES ARE STILL IN FORCE TO SELECTIVELY EDIT OR OMIT SENSITIVE STORIES, BUT THE PAPERS ARE CARRYING SOME REPORTING, FOR EXAMPLE, ON SOUTH KOREA'S DEBATE WITH THE UNITED STATES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

11. ON THE OTHER HAND, PLAINCLOTHES POLICE PLACED MANY NOTED DISSIDENTS UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN THE FIRST WEEK OF MARCH. SURVEILLANCE AND HARASSMENT OF SUSPECTED DISSIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES BY PLAINCLOTHES AGENTS IS ALSO CONTINUING UNCHECKED.

12. ULTIMATELY, THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA TURNS ON THE QUESTION MOST FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED BY POLITICAL ANALYSTS HERE, "WHAT IS THE REAL STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF

THE PARK REGIME?" THE FIRST VIEW HOLDS THAT SINCE PARK USURPED A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN A 1961 MILITARY COUP, HE HAS BUILT SOLID POPULAR SUPPORT THROUGH BRILLIANT MANAGEMENT OF A BOOMING ECONOMY.

13. THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT CRISIS, IN THIS VIEW, IS ONE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE RATHER THAN ANY REAL THREAT OF A NORTH KOREAN INVASION OR A MASS UPRISING IN THE SOUTH. THAT BEING SO, PARK COULD AFFORD TO LOWER HIS GUARD AND RESTORE SOME FREEDOMS AND STILL MAINTAIN THE NATIONAL SECURITY UNITY HE CONSIDERS ESSENTIAL FOR THE TENSE CONFRONTATION WITH THE COMMUNIST NORTH.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 070388 TOSEC 030115

14. THE ARGUMENT IS THAT DESPITE PUBLIC ATTITUDES OF NON-CHALANCE TOWARD THE UPCOMING TROOP WITHDRAWALS, THE GOVERNMENT IS WORRIED, CONSCIOUS OF ITS RELIANCE ON THE UNITED STATES AND READY TO MAKE REAL CONCESSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IF THERE IS DOMESTIC CALM.

15. THE AUTHORITARIAN RULER'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CRITICS DISMISS THAT AS NAIVE, ROSY-HUED DAYDREAMING. THEY ASSERT THAT PARK HAS FOLLOWED A CONSISTENT COURSE OVER THE PAST 16 YEARS OF PERPETUATING AND CONSOLIDATING HIS POWER WITH NEW LAWS, CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND EMERGENCY DECREES WHICH HAVE STEADILY ERODED FREEDOM IN SOUTH KOREA.

16. THE MACHINERY OF REPRESSION IS INTACT TWO MONTHS AFTER CARTER'S INAUGURATION, THE SKEPTICS ARGUE, AND EVEN IF PARK WERE TO LIFT THE SPECIALLY CONTROVERSIAL EMERGENCY MEASURE BANNING POLITICAL DISSENT, HE RETAINS THE POWER TO REIMPOSE IT AT ANY FUTURE TIME.

17. MANY DISSIDENTS ARE INTENSIFYING THEIR APPEALS FOR INTERVENTION ON THEIR BEHALF BY CARTER BECAUSE THEY SUSPECT THAT CONDITIONS MAY OTHERWISE WORSEN. A RECENT STATEMENT BY THE "FAMILIES' ASSOCIATION OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN KOREA" SAID: "WE ARE WORRIED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM KOREA WILL CAUSE FURTHER SUPPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE ALONG WITH STRENGTHENING OF THE DICTATORSHIP."

18. THERE IS VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS DISMAY IN SOUTH KOREA OVER THE IMPENDING DRAWDOWN OF U.S. TROOPS. ALREADY WORRIED AT LOSING WHAT THEY FEEL IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN KOREA'S SECURITY, MANY OPPOSITIONISTS ALSO REGRET THAT

CARTER IS SEPARATING THE SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.

19. "YOU ARE BOUND TO HELP US," SAYS RESOLUTE PARK FOE AND FORMER PRESIDENT, YUM PO SUN, 79. "IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE THERE ARE NO BOUNDARIES ON HUMANITARIANISM. UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 070388 TOSEC 030115

BUT ABOVE THAT YOU HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US. YOU SPENT LIVES AND TREASURE IN THE KOREAN WAR AND YOU HAVE 40,000 SOLDIERS MAINTAINING OUR SECURITY. BUT THERE IS NO MEANING TO THIS...IF WE ARE LOSING OUR FREEDOM TO COMMUNISM OR A DICTATOR, IT IS JUST THE SAME." (END TEXT)

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